



THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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Prime Time Steelhead

By Jim Bedford

The awe struck look on my partner's face said it all. The strike almost removed the rod from his hand and the leaps had him looking up from his waist deep stance in the river. Twice he thought he had lost the silver acrobat only to discover that line sizzling runs had been made back toward him. And, just when he thought the prize would be his the steelhead made one more run, cleared the river surface, and tossed his lure back to him.

Fall run Great Lakes steelhead are truly special fish. Their prime condition following a summer of feeding heavily in the Great Lakes coupled with favorable water temperatures in the 40s and 50s bring out the best in these fish. Vir-



Autumn steelhead on a minnow plug

tually all of our steelhead spawn in the late winter or spring so they have all of the stored up energy for this task available to put a great bend in your rod. They aggressively take a wide variety of lures and baits

and even though the numbers present in the river are considerably smaller in the fall compared to the spring you are likely to find more takers.

I've queried a number of fellow biologists and no one seems to know why portions of the Great Lakes steelhead run in the fall. In the Pacific Northwest there are physical barriers, distances, and water level constraints that cause steelhead to run well in advance of spawning time but those situations don't exist in our Great Lakes tributaries. Many have speculated that the steelhead are following the salmon to feed on their eggs. However, it is uncommon to find salmon eggs in the stomach of an adult steelhead on its river migration and these rainbows were running upstream in the fall before chinook and coho salmon were introduced. In ad-

dition, fall run steelhead tend to linger in the lower reaches of the tributaries, a long way downstream from most of the salmon spawning activity.

Since there is no urgency for fall run steelhead to reach the gravel riffles low water can inhibit their movement upstream. In the past the best fall runs of steelhead have usually occurred when we have periodic heavy rains in October and November. These storm events may put the rivers out of shape for a few days but the high, muddy water will probably lure in another bunch of silver battlers. High Great Lakes levels also help facilitate the fall run of steelhead. Because currently the big lakes are up, autumn rains might not be as important this fall.

"Prime Time"
Continued on page 6

Lake Michigan Fishery Management Plan

By Jay Wesley

Lake Michigan Basin
Coordinator, Fisheries
Division

Just last spring, Michigan celebrated the 50th anniversary of salmon stocking in the Great Lakes. We all know the story of how former DNR Director and Fisheries Division Chief Dr. Howard Tanner took a collapsed fishery that was over-run with alewife and turned it into a world-class fishery with the introduction of coho and Chinook salmon.

Over those 50 years, did you know Michigan did not have a fishery management plan for Lake Michigan? Sure, there were Fish Community Objectives, species plans and stocking policies developed by the Lake Michigan Committee (fisheries managers from the four states and five tribal nations), but the State of Michigan did not have a fishery management plan for the largest freshwater

lake entirely within the United States and the fifth largest lake in the world. Lake Michigan is constantly changing with more than 183 aquatic invasive species that continue to change the food web and our expectations for the lake requiring a more active and agile approach to fisheries management.

All that is about to change with a draft Lake Michigan Fishery Management Plan that will be available for public feedback in winter 2018. The plan has the typical Mission, Vision and Value statements along with a set of Goals, Objectives and Strategies built on solid ecosystem principles that will guide fisheries management well into the future. The plan is also meant to be adaptable and will be a living document that will change annually. Specific tactics will prioritize and focus DNR, Fisheries Division's

"Fishery"
Continued on page 8

Initial Results of 2017 Lake Erie Walleye and Yellow Perch Hatches

Early data gathered in the western basin of Lake Erie indicate that both the walleye and yellow perch hatches were near their annual average, according to the Ohio DNR.

Each year in August, wildlife agencies around the western basin sample the waters using bottom trawls in search of young of the year walleye and yellow perch. Data from these trawls are combined into a basin-wide index, and biologists compare the figures to previous years to estimate the success of the walleye and perch hatches. Biologists from the ODNR conducted trawling surveys at nearly 40 sampling locations across Ohio waters of the western basin. This information provides biol-

ogists with an estimate of how many young fish will enter the fishable population two years later.

Based upon results from the August trawl surveys, the 2017 yellow perch hatch was successful in Ohio waters of the western basin. Initial results found 280 yellow perch per hectare compared to the 20-year average of 300 yellow perch per hectare. Five good yellow perch hatches in a row should help the perch population in the

"Results"
Continued on page 2

Michigan Senate to Consider Regulating "No Greater Than the Feds," Effectively Handing Over Protection of Michigan's Clean Air and Water to the Trump Administration

By Mitch Barrows

Freshwater Future Policy
Associate

The Michigan state House voted in May 57 to 50 in favor of a bill (HB-4205) designed to restrict the ability of state agencies to create regulatory rules that are stronger than federal standards. If passed by the state Senate and signed by Governor Snyder, this bill may end up as the most consequential Michigan environmental law in decades,

impacting efforts to prevent invasive species, keep our drinking water clean, and more.

Under the potential law, the directors of executive agencies like the Department of Environmental Quality would face an additional burden of proving "a clear and convincing need" to exceed the federal standard. Agencies would be required to prepare and present "impact statement[s]," which are notably required

to emphasize the "cost of compliance" for businesses rather than potential public benefits and positive impacts.

With Scott Pruitt as EPA Director, federal environmental regulations will undoubtedly erode. As Oklahoma Attorney General, Pruitt sued the EPA



"Senate"
Continued on page 2

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COLD WEATHER FISHING

By Bob Jensen

As we get farther into the autumn period, the weather gets a little cooler. It's generally not bitterly cold this time of year, and in fact the weather can be beautiful. That's what makes fishing such a good thing this time of year.

However, there are some days when it does get pretty chilly, and eventually it's going to get cold. That doesn't mean we need to stop fishing: In fact we should keep fishing. The fish bite really good on some bodies of water in the cold weather, and a true trophy is a good possibility when the weather is cold. If we want to take advantage of this opportunity, we just need to adjust our fishing habits a little bit. Here are some ideas for more productive and pleasant fishing from now until ice-up.

First of all, in the fall, it usually isn't necessary to be on the water at sun-

up. You can wait awhile and let the day warm up a bit. The best bite is usually later in the day, maybe from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. There can also be a good bite on some lakes after the sun has gone down, but that time of day is usually warmer than early morning. You can fish during the warmest part of the day and still have very good action.

If you're fishing for deep fish, say walleyes or crappies or smallmouth bass, do lots of sonar work. Let your depth-finder tell you if you should fish a spot. If it reveals baitfish or larger fish, give the area a try. If nothing shows up on the sonar, keep moving until something does. This works best in deep water because the cone angle of the transducer covers a larger area in deep water, which increases the odds of showing if fish are present.

Once you find fish in deep water, give them plen-



Everything likes to get caught in the fall. Largemouth bass like this one can be especially aggressive.

ty of opportunities to show you what they want. If you want walleyes, day in and day out, it's really hard to beat a Fire-Ball jig tipped with a larger than ordinary redtail chub. Start with a four inch. If they like that, go bigger. If nothing happens, find a different group of fish. The fish in this school aren't ready to eat, but they will at some time during the day. Check

back with them later. Employ the same tactics for smallmouth bass and crappies, just use smaller baits for the crappies.

To really enjoy your day on the water, you must dress appropriately. You've gotta' dress for the weather. Dress in layers. Good underwear(not cotton) next to your skin, then a hooded sweatshirt, then a vest, then Cabela's GuideWear. The

GuideWear is great stuff. It breaks the wind and any moisture there might be, and it's warm. If it gets too warm, take the outerwear off layer by layer. Once you get to a comfortable layer, you're set. When the day starts to get chilly again, start adding the layers back on. The layering system is easy, comfortable, and effective. Try it!

Cold weather or slow fishing is no excuse to not go fishing in the fall. The only reason you might rather not go fishing in the fall other than family commitments is that your favorite football team is playing, and that's why we've got radios. If you just can't miss the game, turn on the radio, listen to the game, and catch some fish. For some folks, that's about the best fall day possible.

To see old and new episodes of Fishing the Midwest television and fishing articles, video fishing tips, visit fishingthemidwest.com.

"Results"
Continued from page 1

western basin continue to rebuild and lead to quality yellow perch fishing over the next several years.

The 2017 walleye hatch was near the 20-year average in Ohio waters of the western basin. Average to excellent hatches from three of the past four years have resulted in an abundance of young walleye to complement the older and larger fish that make up the current Lake Erie walleye population. Results from Ohio's surveys found 21 walleye per hectare. The average since 1998 is 22 walleye per hectare.

During the upcoming months, Ohio and Ontario bottom trawl data will be combined to estimate the basin-wide hatches of walleye and yellow perch. These estimates will be used as part of the annual process to determine jurisdictional quotas.



"Senate"
Continued from page 1

14 times over the agency's Clean Power Plan, Clean Water Rule, and established limits on mercury, methane, and ozone pollution. Pruitt's EPA has already reversed 23 environmental regulations in its first 100 days, and President Trump has further committed to rolling back two administrative rules for every new rule enacted.

Representative Dan Lauwers (R - District 81) introduced the bill, claiming that the legislation would serve as a 'check' on the regulatory system. But if passed, this bill would surrender the security of Michigan's natural resources to a federal administration working against efforts to safeguard land and water resources that are essential to our economy and way of life.

Federal regulations are baseline protections developed for watersheds and habitats ranging from the Alaskan arctic to the Arizona desert; they are not meant to be comprehensive. The Great Lakes holds twenty percent of the world's fresh water, and harbors thousands of specialized watersheds. Stewardship of Michigan's unique and priceless natural resources requires stable, attentive, and proactive management. House Bill HB-5095 is antithetical to Michigan values and our nation's decentralized system of government, and would hamstring those in power charged with resource conservation.

Contact your state senator and tell them to vote **NO** on on HB-5095.



But Wait: Now How Much Would You Pay?

By Aaron R. Conklin

Wisconsin anglers remain willing to pay a significant amount of money for a successful recreational fishing trip on Lake Michigan, but it varies based on the type of fish species in question.

That's one of several takeaways from research conducted by Daniel

Phaneuf, a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor of agricultural and applied economics, and UW-Madison graduate student Jennifer Raynor. Their work, supported by Wisconsin Sea Grant, represents the latest quantification of the economic value of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan sports fisheries—

and the potential value of certain fish species to the anglers.

Over the course of the 2016 fishing season, Phaneuf and Raynor distributed surveys to licensed anglers. The surveys included a choice experiment designed to get fishers to rank different types of trip configurations, based on trip cost, the type and size of fish involved and how many of that fish they'd likely catch. For instance, anglers were asked if they would pay \$100 for a trip that resulted in catching two medium-sized lake trout, or if they would not take a trip at all under those conditions.

"We wanted people to think about the different attributes of recreation trips,



The next big fish? Anglers in the survey indicated they'd be willing to spend \$180 to take a successful walleye-based fishing trip.

Credit: Wisconsin Sea Grant

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The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA) is a multi-state, non-profit organization dedicated to educating the general public on improving, reserving and promoting sport fishing, the Great Lakes and their tributary streams and rivers. Commonly referred to as The Michigan Steelheaders, or simply Steelheaders. MSSFA represents sport fishing families in the Great Lakes region. MSSFA encourages the strictest observances of sport fishing laws and ethical fishing practices.



Phaneuf: "One big thing we can learn from this is that several species can generate economic value."

Credit: Provided photo



Raynor: "It's helpful to understand that people's preferences are important in managing fisheries."

Credit: Provided photo

as well as the tradeoffs they'd have to make to enjoy each," explained Phaneuf.

Based on Phaneuf and Raynor's findings, a Wisconsin angler would be willing to pay an average of \$140 dollars for a successful Lake Michigan trip that targeted Chinook salmon. Switch the fish to lake

trout, a species that typically offers less resistance to being caught, and the average amount anglers were willing to pay dropped to \$90. Those dollar amounts include everything from travel expenses to charter-trip costs.

"One big thing we can learn from this is that several species can generate

economic value," said Phaneuf. "That raises the question: Because of biological vulnerabilities with salmon and lake trout, what other fisheries could generate value?"

The responses indicated one big possibility is walleye, a species Phaneuf and Raynor also included in the survey. Respondents indicated that on average, they'd be willing to pay \$180 for a successful, walleye-based fishing trip.

"Economics is all about tradeoffs," said Phaneuf. "If salmon declines, can walleye take its place?"

To come up with total dollar values, Phaneuf used creel survey data collected by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to gauge the number of fishing trips actually taken by anglers in Wisconsin each year. From the most recent set of data, Phaneuf was able to multiply the number of trips by the survey re-

sults to estimate that Lake Michigan fishing trips for Chinook salmon generated \$32 million in 2016, while lake trout trips produced \$8 million and walleye trips \$33 million.

Those numbers offer ample evidence that Wisconsin anglers value and use Lake Michigan fisheries.

"We're used to thinking about the economic value of market activity," said Phaneuf. "But it's equally valid for non-market commodities like fishing trips. It reminds us that environmental resources do generate economic value, and this value should be considered in policy debates."

Phaneuf and Raynor's numbers are likely to be of key interest to state fisheries managers, who can potentially use them to guide their management decision and resource distribution. Given that the populations of native and non-native species are affected by everything from invasive species and environmental degradation to changes in state budget and policy, they could be especially valuable.

"It's helpful to understand that people's preferences are important in managing fisheries," says Raynor, who's working on a Ph.D. in agricultural and applied economics. "There's obviously a difference between considering the human dimension and managing for ecological purity."

Phaneuf is hoping to follow up his Lake Michigan work with a more sophisticated analysis that examines how anglers' values and preferences are changing over time. He will be adding data from Canada and the other Great Lakes.

"Looking back in time, there's variation in the number of trips people took, as well as the number of fish they caught," he said. "For instance, this means economic value was different when the salmon stock was higher than it is today."



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MSSFA PRESIDENT

Dr. Ken Merckel

On October 7th, 2017, the State Board Meeting was held at Jay's in Clare to accommodate the Northern Chapters. I want to thank all the chapters that attended, especially the Traverse City Area Steelheaders Chapter.

On October 11th, 2017, the Lake Huron Citizen's Advisory Committee met in Clare. The main topic in the morning was the three Chinook plants in northern Lake Huron. These plants are at Nunn's Creek (2000 consent agreement), the Swan River Weir for egg take, and the Cheboygan River. All three plants provide a fall fishery from the Mackinac Bridge to Alpena. Several choices on planting sites were presented and the final outcome

was to keep the fish in Lake Huron.

Lake Trout stocking in Lake Huron will end in 2018. Natural reproduction seems to be taking over in northern Lake Huron, but the Lake Trout population in the Central and Southern sections of Lake Huron appears to be declining. Jim Johnson and Ji He are in the process of completing a report that indicated the Lake Trout abundance of older fish in the central and Southern section of Lake Huron appears to be declining sharply. Two possible causes were discussed: Some older fish may not be adequately sampled during the surveys because the fish could be inhabiting off shore reefs which are not currently monitored and

the Canadian Commercial Fishers may be having a greater impact than we think.

This brings a need for a TAC (Total Allowable Catch) for Lake Trout in Lake Huron. Lake Trout are a shared resource between Canada, Michigan, and the Tribal Fisheries in Michigan.

The State of Michigan cannot negotiate directly with a Sovereign Nation (Indian Tribe). The State must request the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission to facilitate a TAC with Canada on Lake Trout. There is a great possibility that natural reproduction will not sustain the Lake Trout fishery in Lake Huron.

The latest Creel reports

on Atlantic Salmon shows the Lexington plant is producing a fishery from the St. Mary's River to the Huron River.

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Autumn River Walleyes

By Bob Jensen

When some anglers are putting their fishing equipment away for the season, a few in-the-know folks are getting ready for what can be some of the fastest walleye fishing of the year. The rivers that criss-cross the Midwest can provide some outstanding walleye fishing right through the fall and winter months. Here's how you can take advantage of that action.

There are several locations in rivers that hold walleyes this time of year. Current breaking structures like wing-dams can be very productive, as can deeper holes. Sand flats extending below islands can also be good. We will need to try different areas to determine where the majority of the fish are holding on the river being fished. Deep holes can be very good on larger rivers, while the current breaking structures are productive on smaller rivers. Deep holes in small rivers will hold walleyes, but not

as many as the deep holes in larger rivers.

When fishing structures, try to determine if the fish are holding in a particular area of the structure. Let's say we're fishing a wing-dam. Pay attention to where the fish are coming from. Maybe they're holding on the tip of the wing-dam, or maybe they're on the upstream side of it. Once you've figured out where they are on the structure being fished, you should start on that same area on other wing-dams that you fish on that day.

Jigs are the way to catch these cold water walleyes. There are lots of jigs available, but a Fire-Ball jig is as good as it gets. This jig has a short-shank hook with a wide gap. That results in a much better hooking ratio.

A three inch fathead minnow is a traditional addition to the back of the jig, and they still do a great job of getting walleyes to eat.

More and more, anglers are going to plastics on their jigs. Plastics are often thought of as warm weather baits, and they do work well in warm weather. However, in the fall, plastics continue to produce in rivers. The jig can be held perfectly still just a few inches off the bottom, and the current will make the tail work. Much of the time, a walleye can't resist a jig hovering right in their face with that tail wiggling. Try a 3 inch Impulse Swim'N Grub on a Slurp! Jig. Use a jig heavy enough to get to the bottom, but not so light that the current quickly sweeps it away. Tails/jigs with some orange or chartreuse are good starting colors, but let the fish tell what color they want. There are times when they'll show a distinct color preference.

Strikes can be soft this time of year. I like 15 pound P-Line XTCB braid with a Tactical Fluorocarbon leader tied on. 8 pound test for the fluorocarbon is good. This set-up will provide outstanding sensitivity and hooksets and will also help you save some, not all, but some jigs from snags.

There are lots of rivers across the Midwest that will offer this walleye action for the next couple of months. If you want to catch some walleyes right now, keep the above ideas in mind.



Smallmouth bass can be taken in rivers this time of the year also.

John Peterson caught this smallie on a river while throwing a jig/plastic combination for walleyes.



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Dennis Eade, Executive Director
Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association

On September 26th and 27th, MSSFA participated in a Washington, D.C. Fly-In to advocate for co-sponsors for Congressman Dan Kildee's H.R. 961 and H.R. 962 which will maintain our pristine coastal shorelines and protect our fish and wildlife, and our outdoor heritage from the threats of commercial fish farming in the Great Lakes. The trip to Washington, D.C. was facilitated and paid for with a grant from the National Wildlife Federation. I was successful in getting the Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan to exert its influence on behalf of Michigan's \$38 billion tourism industry by providing a letter of support from its members for Kildee's bills. Kildee's office arranged for a Congressional Staff Briefing on Wednesday, September 27th and was attended by seventeen legislative directors to learn about the

threats posed by commercial net-pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes. I presented an overview of my trip to Canada last year and what I observed at the fish farms on Manitoulin Island, Ontario. We stressed the pollution caused by the accumulation of fish manure and nutrients under the nets, the potential disease that can occur in overcrowded pens and its spread to wild fish and the inevitable escapement and interbreeding with wild fish that occurs when the nets are breeched in these operations. I also visited with Senator Debbie Stabenow's staff, and with the legislative directors for Congressmen Amash, Walberg, Huizenga, Upton, Trott, Mitchell, Bishop, and Moolenaar over the course of the two days. We requested that each of them have their representative co-sponsor HR 961 and HR



Dennis Eade briefs seventeen congressional staffers on the continued threats to wild fish and the environment posed by Canadian net-pen operations off the Manitoulin Island, Ontario.

From left to right: Marc Smith, National Wildlife Federation, Tom Baird, Anglers of the Au Sable, Dan Eichinger, MUCC, Dennis Eade, MSSFA, and Taylor Ridderbusch, TU.

962, Cong. Dan Kildee's bills banning commercial net-pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes and connecting Wild and Scenic Rivers. I am confident we will see support for these bills as a result of our visits.

The MDNR Fisheries Division has not yet introduced a new statute which would allow commercial fishermen to keep 100 lbs. of walleye and lake trout

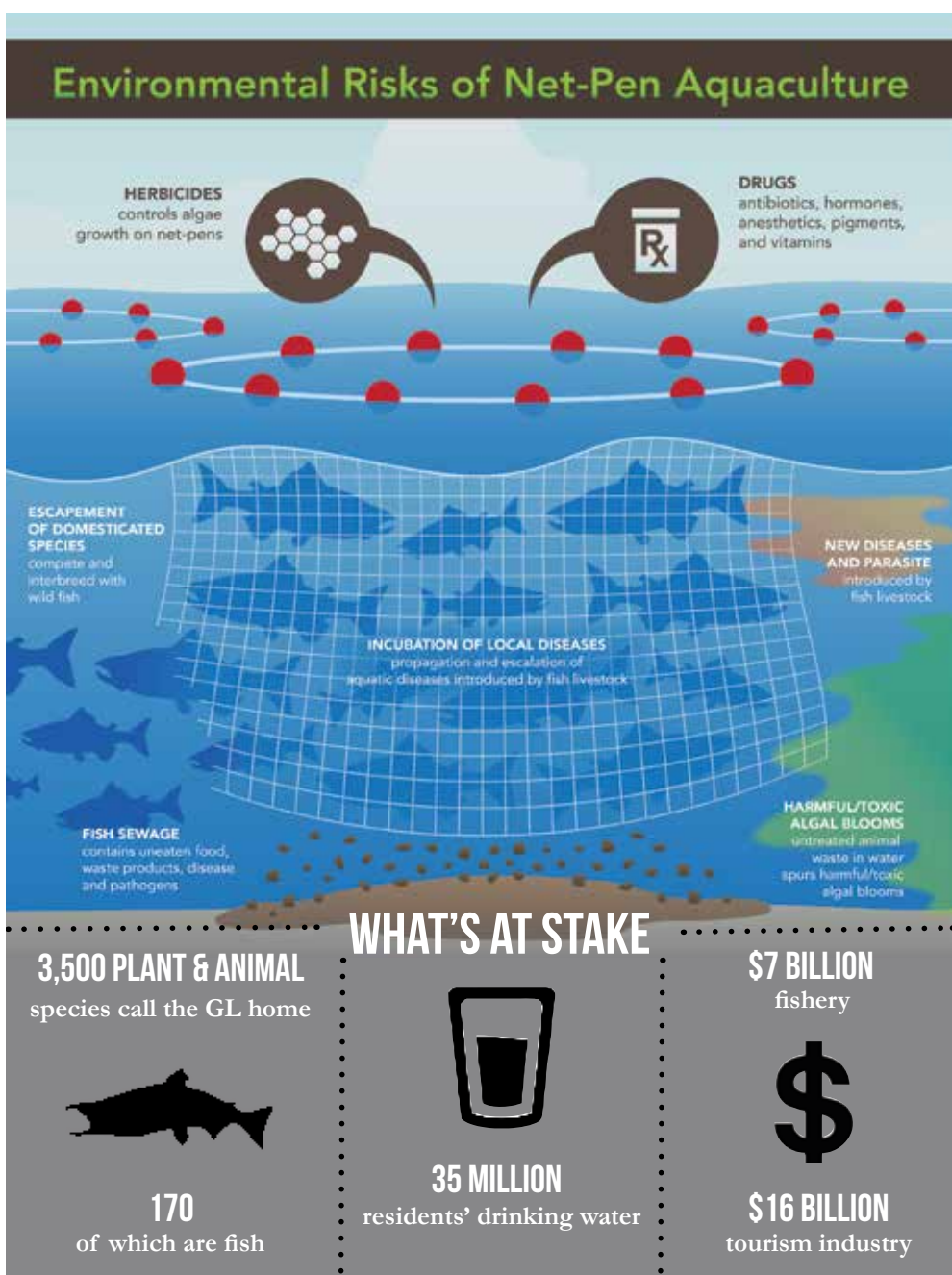
per day as bycatch in their nets. MSSFA has joined with the other sport fishing organizations like TU, Hammond Bay Anglers, MUCC, MCBA, and the Saginaw Bay Walleye Club, to draft an acceptable alternative proposal that protects our \$4.2 billion sports fishing industry in Michigan from this encroachment on the sport fishery. We object to the Bycatch allow-

ance; want GPS gear location availability; want to be included on the advisory committee on regulations of commercial fishing and the authority to suspend the use of small-mesh gill nets in areas of the lakes where harm to other species would be detrimental.

Rep. Gary Howell has introduced HB 4884 which amends the Aquaculture Enabling Act to exclude

the Great Lakes or the connecting waters of the Great Lakes. This is an important move to strengthen the Act to prevent commercial aquaculture operators from utilizing the public trust waters of the state. MSSFA supports HB 4884 and encourages its members to communicate that support

"Great Lakes"
Continued on page 12



The Risks of NET-PEN AQUACULTURE in the Great Lakes

The risks of net-pen aquaculture were recently realized in the Pacific Northwest when a net-pen of 305,000 Atlantic salmon broke and released many into waters inhabited by native chinook and steelhead, creating an "environmental nightmare," according to local biologists. Anglers in the Great Lakes want to prevent the same problem.

Net pen aquaculture risks ESCAPEMENT

of farm-raised fish into wild public waters, risking ecological imbalance (like Asian carp) or introducing domesticated gene pools into wild sport fish.

Great Lakes sport-fishing generates **\$7 billion** annually, including \$4 billion in Michigan alone.

Nutrient pollution from excess FISH SEWAGE

accumulates below net pen aquaculture facilities from fish waste, uneaten food and pathogens, smothering lake bed life and stimulating toxic algae blooms.

68% of Michigan citizens oppose allowing net-pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes according to a 2016 poll, including **77% opposition** in regions of the state being considered. *2016 EPIC-MRA Poll

Net pens can spread FISH DISEASE

to wild fish from high concentrations of farm-raised fish in small areas, as well as drugs, antibiotics and hormones into public waters.

The Great Lakes provide **30 million** people with drinking water and **20%** of the world's surface fresh water.

The following organizations representing hunters, anglers and conservationists in the Great Lakes ask you to co-sponsor two pieces of legislation to prevent the escapement, fish sewage and fish disease risks from contaminating the Great Lakes' drinking water, jobs and fishing:

HR 961: Ban Aquaculture in the Great Lakes Act - Rep. Dan Kildee (D-MI-5)
HR 962: Preserving Fishing on Wild and Scenic Rivers Act - Rep. Dan Kildee (D-MI-5)

Trout Unlimited | National Wildlife Federation | Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association | Anglers of the Au Sable

“Prime Time”

Continued from page 1

Even when we do have ample rainfall autumn steelhead will tend to be more concentrated in the lower reaches of the tributaries. You can also expect the larger rivers to get better runs than small rivers and creeks. These fish may move into small tributaries of both the Lakes and the large tributary rivers during high water and then retreat to the bigger water when the small streams drop and clear.

Drifting salmon or steelhead eggs is the most popular technique used for steelies in the fall just like it is in the spring. Skippers, which are young steelhead returning to their planted or natal stream after just one summer in the Great Lakes, will often actively feed when they are in the river and you can't beat single eggs or small spawn bags for these small but very active steelhead. Larger adult steelhead are much less likely to actively feed on their river migration and usually don't swallow the bait. However, spawn and other live baits like wigglers and wax worms still are very effective because the fish will pick them up out of irritation, feeding memory, or curiosity. Then they will mouth the bait until you set the hook because it smells, tastes, and feels “right”.

One of the disadvantages of eggs and other live



Jim Bedford with a bright deer season steelhead on a minnow plug

baits is that they are not very visible to the steelhead and you need to get them very close to the fish in order to entice a take. You can increase your strikes by using bright fluorescent netting for your spawn sacks and adding some yarn in a contrasting bright color. A small drift bobber slid on the leader will also help steelhead locate your drifting bait and may help to excite them into grabbing it. In recent years, small, brightly colored jigs dressed with marabou and tipped with a wiggler, wax worm or small spawn bag have proven to be excellent steelhead takers. The jigs are suspended with a float well off the bottom and are especially effective when there is a bit of a chop to the river surface. This makes the float bounce, which in turn causes the jig to rock,

and the marabou to pulsate. Finding ways to attract steelhead to your offering are important because fall steelies are rarely found in big concentrations.

When drift fishing it is important to use the right amount of sinker weight for the run you are fishing and quickly be able to adjust the weight for the next run. You want to be able to keep the bait near the bottom but not on it and it is better to err on the high side. Split shot are the usual choice for our sand and gravel bottomed rivers but if the substrate is rocky, pencil lead and Slinkies will keep you from getting hung up. Any time there are lots of snags present or the current is slow use a float to make your drift.

Autumn run steelies also eagerly attack lures that invade their territo-

ry. Cast and retrieve anglers usually toss weighted spinners, minnow plugs, and heavy, highly curved spoons. My long time preference for moving water is the weighted spinner. This lure has action at a very slow retrieve and the flash and vibrations from the revolving blade really arouse fall run steelhead into an aggressive response. Spinners with broad French type blades such as the Mepps Aglia, Double Loon, and Super Vibrax are best for most river fishing.

Silver is usually the best bet for a blade finish because it reflects light much better than nickel, chrome, and brass. Usually the surroundings and the river water are quite dark so the silver finish will make your lure much more visible to the steelhead. Lure tape on the back of the blade in contrasting fluorescent colors along with brightly colored beads and hook dressings and shiny body components also help to capture the steelhead's attention. Of course when you are fishing a small, clear river on a bright day you will want to scale down to a smaller spinner with a brass or copper blade.

Spinners can be cast in just about any direction except straight downstream. Usually they are cast either quartering with the current or across and down. They should be retrieved just fast enough to keep the blade spinning. When casting

across and down this often means you will have to retrieve only a small amount to keep the blade turning on the sweep.

Deep diving plugs or crank baits can also be cast and retrieved by the wading angler but they are usually worked from a boat. The traditional drop back method from an anchored boat is still employed by many anglers. The key to success with this method is the choosing of good holding water and the proper positioning of the boat above the run. Plugs must be


picked that will work well relative to the depth and current speed. Deep runs and holes with moderate current and lots of cover along their edges in the lower parts of our rivers are the places to try.

Pulling plugs from a drift boat is a great way to fish for fall steelhead in our larger tributaries. This technique is especially effective at this time of year because it is possible to cover a tremendous amount of water



“Prime Time”
Continued on page 7

Bob Bryans admires a fall steelhead





Your banana is not the Plague in a Peel.
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2017 Battle Creek Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Information | Contact Info |
|----------|------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| November | 25 | St. Joe River Fall Steelhead | I-94 Boat Ramp | Todd Sidnam 269-317-0324 |
| December | 2 | St. Joe River Chapter Challenge | Southwest Chapter | Ryan McCartney 574-274-6382 |
| December | 9 | Christmas Party | | Kalamazoo Eagles |

2017 Flint River Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Information | Contact Info |
|----------|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| November | 8 | Membership Meeting | 7:00 pm at Walli’s | Burton, MI |
| December | 13 | Membership Meeting | 7:00 pm at Walli’s | Burton, MI |

2017 Grand Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Information | Contact Info |
|---|------|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| December | TBD | Christmas dinner/annual meeting | | |
| For more information on Grand Haven Steelheaders activities, contact: Roger Belter - 616-842-0877 or rogerbelter@gmail.com | | | | |

2017 Grand Rapids Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Information |
|----------|------|--|-------------------|
| November | 4 | Fall River Contest - Grand & Muskegon Rivers and their Tributaries STC | |
| November | 6 | Board of Directors Meeting | 7 PM |
| November | 11 | Fishing Partners Manistee Contest STC | |
| November | 27 | Membership Meeting | 7:30 PM / Social |
| December | 4 | Board of Directors Meeting | 7 PM |
| December | 11 | Chapter Family Christmas Party | 6 PM Diamond Hall |

2017 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Comments | Contact Info |
|---|------|---|----------|--------------|
| December | 9 | Christmas/Awards Banquet Bring family and friends! | | |
| Membership meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 989-496-3410 | | | | |
| Board meetings: 6:00 pm / Membership meetings: 7:00 pm All Board/Membership meetings are held first Tuesday of each month with the exception of May, June, July and August. A raffle is held following all membership meetings. BRING A FRIEND! All membership meetings are open to the public. Register via Marine Radio channel 72 at beginning of all events. Weigh in’s and picnics follow at 2:00 pm. | | | | |
| For more information, email: kathy@steel-headers.com or check web page www.steel-headers.com | | | | |

2017 Holland Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Information |
|--|------|----------------------------|--|
| November | 6 | Board Meeting | Membership meetings held at: Yacht Basin Yacht Club |
| December | 2 | River Tournament | 1862 Ottawa Beach Road, Holland MI 49424 |
| December | 4 | Board Meeting | Social hour at 6 pm, Dinner at 7 pm |
| December | 7 | General Membership Meeting | Call board members to find out location of board meetings. |
| For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jeremy Erdman 616-510-9405 | | | |

2017 Huron Valley Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Information | Membership Meetings Held at: |
|-------|------|-------|-------------|---|
| | | | | American Legion Post #200 11800 Michaels St. Taylor, MI 48180 |
| | | | | John Popp tzjohn@comcast.net |

2017 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Chair |
|--|------|---|--------------------|
| November | 4 | River Tournament Manistee w Det. S | TBD |
| November | 7 | General Membership Meeting | |
| November | 18 | Pere Marquette River (Flies Only Section) w/ TCAS | Phil Bustos |
| December | 5 | CHRISTMS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS | |
| December | 9 | Huron River Tournament | Hinchcliff / Davis |
| ** ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** 7:00 PM at The New Livonia Seniors Center at the Southeast Corner of Farmington Road and Five Mile Road Contact: <i>President</i> Larry Tabaka 313-215-8979 / <i>Membership Director</i> Henry Nabors 248-225-4964 | | | |

2017 South Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event |
|--|------|-----------------------------------|
| November | 1 | Pro Am Committee 2018 Kick-off #1 |
| November | 16 | Membership Meeting |
| November | 16 | Board Meeting |
| November | 25 | River Tournament |
| December | 6 | Pro Am Committee 2018 #2 |
| December | 7 | Local Tournament Committee Annual |
| December | 9 | Holiday Party |
| Membership Meetings Held at: South Haven Moose Lodge, 1025 East Wells Street, South Haven, MI 49040 Contact: SHS President | | |

2017 Southwest MI Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Location / Contact Info |
|---|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| November | 8 | Membership Meeting | Social Hour: 6:00-7:00 |
| December | 2 | Writer Challenge Tournament | Meeting: 7:00-8:30 PM |
| December | 8 | Christmas Party | |
| Membership Meetings Held at: St. Joseph-Benton harbor Elks 541, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022 Contact: Jim Marohn 29-208-2784 | | | |

2017 TCAS Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Location / Contact Info | Time |
|---|------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| November | 1 | Membership Meeting | | 6:30 pm |
| December | 8 | Christmas Party | | |
| Membership Meetings Held at: Traverse City Senior Center, 801 Front St., Traverse City, MI 49686 | | | | |

2017 Thumb Chapter Steelheader’s Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Event | Information | Location |
|-------|------|-------|-------------|----------|
| | | | | |

“Prime Time”
Continued from page 6

while searching for autumn’s scattered steelhead and almost makes finding some silver torpedoes a sure bet. Most savvy rowers let their plugs out about 50 or 60 feet behind the boat in a relative straight line. This causes the plugs to invade the steelhead’s territory in unison and if the fish moves aside to dodge one wobbling lure it will encounter another one and likely clobber it. In addition to rowing a drift boat you can also use an electric motor to slow the downstream movement of a conventional boat while pulling plugs. This also makes it easier to fish a productive run again by motoring back up and making a second pass. Once you have found a concentration of fish you can also anchor and pull out the drift rod and try to entice some more steelhead.

Regardless of your preferred method for steelhead don’t let this fall pass without trying to do battle with these migratory rainbows

that are absolutely in prime condition. If your past experience has only been with spring steelhead you will be very pleasantly surprised by the consistently spectacular battles these fish put up in the fall. Just keep an eye

on the rain gauge and try to hit your favorite Great Lakes tributary a few days after a substantial autumn rain.



Terri Bedford with a bright steelhead on a spinner.



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A Trip To Remember



Travis and Jaeleigh Carlson with a nice walleye taken just before shorelunch. This walleye didn’t go to shore with us, it was too big.

By Bob Jensen

I went fishing to one of my all-time favorite places recently, Lake Kabetogama in the Voyageur’s National Park in northern Minnesota. I’ve been to Kab many times in the past fifteen years. I go there for several reasons, but mostly because it’s a world class fishery for a variety of fish. Usually our focus is on the fishing, and on this trip we were going to take our fishing seriously, but maybe not as seriously as we usually do. Here’s what I mean.

I was going to be fishing with local angler Travis Carlson. Travis moved to Kab from Iowa a number of years ago. He and his family looked all over the Midwest for a place to buy a resort and to live. They

decided that they wanted to live in the Kabetogama area more than anywhere else. Travis has a wife, a son Riley, and a daughter Jaeleigh. Travis had been working long days much of the summer, and the kids were getting ready to go back to school. Everyone decided that it would be a good idea if Riley and Jaeleigh joined Travis and me for a day of fishing. I’m glad they did.

When we fish Kab, we usually target larger fish in deeper water. When you’re with youngsters or anyone who hasn’t been fishing very long, it’s important to target fish that want to get caught, and sometimes that means fishing in areas where there are more fish but maybe not the big ones.

We started on a weedline and pulled Fire-Ball jigs tipped with minnows and live-bait rigs tipped with crawlers or leeches. We got bit almost immediately, and, for the next couple of hours, frequently. A good number of perch, walleyes, and sauger were calling this area home. Everyone in the boat was having a good time.

Then the sun came out and the wind quit blowing into the area that we were fishing. The fishing action slowed considerably, so we moved to another area. When fishing slows due to bright skies or no wind, you need to move to another location. We moved to an area that had some wind blowing into it and the catching started

all over, and the walleyes were bigger. On Kab they protect the walleyes with a slot limit. There are lots of eater ‘eyes, but also lots of big ones.

We caught a few more fish, then realized we were hungry, and we did something we rarely do. We stopped for shorelunch. Usually when we’re fishing, eating consists of gobbling down a sandwich as we move from one spot to another. On Kab there are lots of places that have fire pits to cook in. We found one and soon had a fire going. While the kids swam, Travis cleaned the fish and cooked them over the open fire. Then we ate walleyes that an hour ago were swimming in the lake. There’s just something about eating a shorelunch that makes the fish taste better.

After eating, we tried another spot, caught a few more fish, and called it a day. It was an outstanding day. I doubt that I’ll do shorelunch again for a while, but it really was a nice change of pace from our usual fishing outings. It was also good to see kids take a sincere interest in being outside. We fished a full day and never once did I hear anyone say they wanted to go in or do something else. In my book, that’s a win.

To see the newest episodes of *Fishing the Midwest* and some from the past, short video tips, and recent and archived fishing articles, go to fishingthemidwest.com

“Fishery”
Continued from page 1

actions for Lake Michigan, and stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide constant feedback to ensure we are adapting to opportunities and impediments in a timely manner.

The draft Plan’s Vision Statement: *To provide world-class freshwater fishing opportunities supported by healthy aquatic environments that enhances the quality of life in Lake Michigan communities.*

This vision sets very high expectations for us as an agency. We will continue to be challenged with invasive species and changing environmental conditions in Lake Michigan while we strive to manage the fishery using sound science and management that equally considers biological/physical, economic and social factors.

Accountability and reporting-out key outcomes will be an important aspect of the plan and our communications about the fishery. Some of these outcomes include:

- No introductions of big-head, silver or black (invasive) carps into Lake Michigan.
- Maintain the lake-wide sea lamprey abundance index at or below targets.
- Increase connectivity of Lake Michigan to tributaries.
- Increase contribution of wild salmon and trout to the fishery.
- Balance the predator and prey community as indicated by the Chinook salmon and alewife predator/prey model.
- Diverse fishery comprised primarily of Chinook salmon, coho salmon and steelhead and secondarily of lake trout and brown trout.
- Increase salmon and trout fishing effort to 1.1 million hours annually for Michigan waters of Lake Michigan (2016’s effort was 687,000).
- Increase economic activity and quality of life for Lake Michigan communities.
- Ecosystem based lake-wide fishery management decisions through Lake Michigan Committee consensus.
- Maintain and enhance data collection and analyses to monitor fish populations, quantify angler use and harvest, and evaluate management actions.

One tactic in the plan under the goal to Provide Diverse Fishing Opportunities will certainly be of interest to anglers and will be one discussed more thoroughly at future public meetings. The tactic is “Implement a zonal management concept to help promote the fishery and match fishery opportunities with available habitat that are

consistent with lake-wide goals and fish community objectives”.

For 50 years, we have basically treated Lake Michigan ports the same regarding our fisheries management. For example, the strategy was to stock as many ports with Chinook salmon, coho salmon, steelhead, lake trout and brown trout with the thought it would provide a fishery there. Now we know some fish move throughout the lake and some fish require specific habitats to ensure good survival. Our fisheries management must first consider what is best for the entire lake through consensus management with the Lake Michigan Committee. Zonal management is a second tier of management that can help guide what Michigan will do with its allotment of the fishery and stocking. This concept will use habitat features such as water depth, seasonal lake temperatures, reefs, drowned river mouth lakes, and rivers to focus management on the best places for a particular species.

A simple depth contour map can illustrate this habitat complexity and where the good opportunities for management are. Northern Lake Michigan tends to be deeper with a complex of islands and reefs and southern Lake Michigan tends to be shallow. Lake temperatures tend to be cooler to the north and warmer to the south. Coldwater tributaries enter the lake to the north providing great natural reproduction for salmon and trout while large warm rivers to the south provide needed nutrients and great warm water fisheries but less opportunity for natural reproduction of salmon and trout. Green Bay, the largest freshwater estuary in the world, provides habitat for warm water species like perch, walleye, small-mouth bass and muskellunge while Grand Traverse Bay provides deep and cold water habitat for lake trout, cisco and salmon.

It is our intent to acknowledge this habitat complexity and work with anglers and the public to match our management with this habitat to maximize fishing opportunities throughout Lake Michigan.

This is just a small example of what is in the draft Lake Michigan Fishery Management Plan. We hope you will take the time to review the document and offer feedback. Public meetings will be scheduled in late fall or early winter, and there will be a designated website where you can have access to the plan, review pertinent content about Lake Michigan, and provide feedback.

It is up to us to manage Lake Michigan for the next 50 years and maintain our world-class fishery.

For an early copy of the plan, please contact Jay Wesley at wesleyj@michigan.gov.

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ing Weekend. During that time all fishing license fees will be waived allowing residents and out-of-state visitors to enjoy fishing on all waters for all species of fish during their respective open seasons. Please note all other regulations still apply during that time.

Michigan has been celebrating Winter Free Fishing Weekend every year since 1994 as a way to promote awareness of the state's vast aquatic resources. Why not

plan to take advantage of this FREE opportunity to get outdoors and fish and share the fun with others?

Please consider getting outdoors and fishing February 17 and 18 in honor of the 2018 Winter Free Fishing Weekend. Not sure where to go or how to ice fish? Check out www.michigan.gov/freefishing for more information or for a list of the organized fishing activities offered in communities across the state.

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Register today for this opportunity to learn about inland lakes from MSU Extension and participants across the Midwest.

The *Introduction to Lakes* course is being offered again in January 2018, and registration is open now. This popular six-week course is offered in a convenient self-paced online format. *Introduction to Lakes* is designed for anyone interested in lakes, including lakefront proper-

ty owners, lake users, local government officials, lake managers and educators. The course schedule allows for regular online communication with classmates and course instructors through discussion forums and live Ask-an-Expert webinars.

Introduction to Lakes is taught by lake experts from Michigan State University Extension. Students have week-by-week, 24/7 access to six online units; complete with video lectures, web-based activities, discussion forums, three biweekly live webinars and quizzes to assess learning. A certificate of completion is awarded to those who complete assignments and quizzes.

Here is a glimpse into the content covered in *Introduction to Lakes*:

- Lake ecology
- Lakes and their watersheds
- Shoreline stewardship
- Michigan water law
- Aquatic plant management.
- Citizen involvement.

The 2018 course begins on January 23 and will run through March 9. The Ask-an-Expert webinars are scheduled from 12 to 1 p.m. on Feb. 7, 21, and March 7, 2018. The cost of the course is \$115 per person.

Online course registration is now open. Register by December 22, 2017 to receive an early bird discount of \$95 per person. Registration ends January 16, 2018. For complete registration details please visit the *Introduction to Lakes Online* program page, at http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/introduction_to_lakes_online

Fourteen Michigan Department of Rural Development Pesticide Applicator Recertification credits, 14 Michigan Department of Education State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECH), and 6 Master Citizen Planner Education Credits are available for this course.

This article was originally published by Michigan State University Extension. (Edited here for length) For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>.

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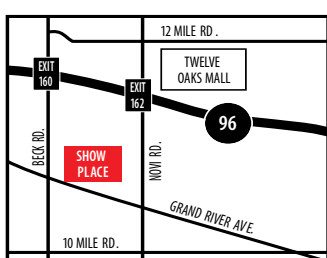
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About Us...

MSSFA was organized in 1971 by a handful of individuals who knew that Michigan's newly formed trout and salmon fishery was something worth working to protect. They were a small group who wanted to not only protect their fishery, but learn how to catch their elusive prey and tell fishing stories.

MSSFA chapters have membership meetings with guest speakers to learn about all the aspects of sport fishing. MSSFA chapters also sponsor fishing clinics, seminars, sport-fishing shows, derbies and tournaments. And are active sponsors for fishing outings for kids, seniors, veterans and our handicapped.

For those who love to fish but have no means, MSSFA chapters sponsor a "Crews" program that allows a sign up as a crewmember for a day of fishing.

With a common goal, and a close working partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MSSFA helps to enhance the resource and sport fishing in our rivers, streams, inland lakes, and of course the mighty Great Lakes. MSSFA is a front-runner at all levels of the legislature and in courtrooms and has spent countless hours working behind the scenes and attending hearings.

So why join the *Steelheaders*....Got kids, love fishing. **JOIN NOW!** And become a member of the largest organized group of fishermen in the Midwest. There are chapters throughout the entire state. You too can help protect and preserve this world-class sport fishery for you, your children, and generations to come.

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The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News is owned and operated by The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association.

Better than forty years ago, The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association began to publish a magazine called the "Guide to Great Lakes Sport Fishing." Five years later the magazine became a monthly format called "The Great Lakes Steelheader." Today the newspaper is called "*The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News*."

This paper has no paid writers and has a grass roots style. Its writers are the every day fishermen who share their techniques and fishing adventures. And has become well renown for it's *January Special Edition* or "*Show Edition*" that is seen at all the spring expos and sport, boat and fishing shows throughout the Great Lakes.

Information in the paper covers the entire Great Lakes Basin region from Minnesota to New York including all five of the Great Lakes and their tributary streams.

Chapter members receive the paper as part of their membership. And because of the diversity of fishing in the Great Lakes, the information covers everything from river fishing, big lake fishing to inland lake fishing. The paper also offers a direct route to all the new products and techniques on the market through our advertisers.

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| Wednesday June 20, 2018 | 7:00 PM | MUCC |
| Wednesday August 15, 2018 | 7:00 PM | MUCC (optional mtg.) |
| Wednesday October 17, 2018 | 7:00 PM | MUCC |
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The most current information can be found on the MSSFA website:
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Storing Your Fishing Gear



There’s still lots of time to go fishing, but if you’re done for the year, take care of a few fishing tasks now so you’ll be ready to hit the water next year.

by Bob Jensen

For some anglers, the open water fishing season is history. If you’re one of those anglers, there are some things you should do while open water fishing is still a fresh memory. If you don’t do those things now, if you’re like me, you’ll probably forget to do them, and that could create problems and expenses when the next open water fishing season returns. Following are some tasks you should do this weekend if you’re done fishing for the year.

The best place to start is with your boat. You can probably get by with just parking it in the garage and not doing much to it for a year, maybe two, but eventually, improper storage will create headaches and expenses.

Have the motor winterized. Some handy anglers can do this themselves: I’m not handy. However, the motor that I run, an Evinrude E-TEC, can be winterized by anyone. It’s a simple two minute deal. What I really like about this is, if I find out the wall-eyes are going on the river, I can go fishing and, when I’m done for the day, I can quickly and efficiently winterize the boat again. If you

have to take the boat to a mechanic for winterizing, you’re probably not going to take advantage of those unexpected fishing opportunities.

Remove the boat’s drain plug. Also, make sure there’s no water in the lower unit of the motor. If there is, and if it freezes, you could have big problems come spring.

Check for line in the prop of your outboard and electric motor. Also check for dings in the prop and have them fixed.

Some folks take the batteries out of their boats and store them someplace where it’s not cold, but if you want to leave them in the boat, make sure the battery is charged and then disconnect the wires. Check the charge of the battery a couple of times during the winter.

Lots of anglers like to take the depth-finders out of their boats.

Remove anything that could attract rodents. You don’t want a family of mice to make their home in the boat over the winter.

Open all storage lids and remove lifejackets to let them air out. If you’ve got inflatable lifejackets, check the canister to make sure it’s

still good.

Do a walk around the trailer. If you’ve got a bad tire, replace it.

Make sure all the trailer lights are working. Now is the time to fix any that aren’t.

When it comes to reels, back off on the drag. Reel experts say it’s harmful to the reel to store it with the drag tightened down for extended periods of time.

Also, don’t store rods with a bend in them. If some rods are stored with a bend long enough, it will weaken it.

If your line needs to be replaced, strip off fifty yards. This will force you to put new line on before you go fishing again. I like to take the line off now, but I replace it in the spring.

Open your tackle box and let it dry out. You don’t want to store your baits in a wet tray.

If you take care of these tasks now, you’ll be ready to go when the water warms up and the fish start biting in the spring.

To see new and old episodes of Fishing the Midwest television, new and old fishing articles, and fishing video tips, visit fishingthemidwest.com

“Great Lakes” Continued from page 5

to your representatives in Lansing.

On September 19th, MUCC and the National Wildlife Federation sponsored Great Lakes Day at the Capitol in Lansing, MI to advocate and engage state legislators in support of Great Lakes issues. I attended, as did MSSFA’s vice president Eric Braden. I visited with Rep. Jim Lilly (Dist. 89), Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr. (Dist. 23), Rep. Gary Howell (Dist. 82) and Speaker of the House, Tom Leonard. Lilly and Howell thanked us for sponsoring the fishing outing in Ludington last July and maintained they learned a lot about the fishery by participating in the event.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is conducting public meetings to gather comments of the released draft plan for how to protect the Great Lakes from the invasive Asian carp. They are reviewing options for bolstering defenses at a lock and dam structure near Joliet, Ill.—officially called the Brandon Road Lock and Dam—which is a choke point between the current location of Asian carp and the Great Lakes.

The draft study was ready in February, but the Trump Administration delayed its release for five months. The live capture of a silver carp on the Lake Michigan side of the electrical deterrents in June, combined with Bi-partisan Congressional pressure

and public outcry forced the Trump Administration to release the study. (The draft plan can be found at: <http://glmris.anl.gov/brandon-rd/>)

The study offers promising solutions to keep the invasive Asian carp at bay. It relies on multiple technologies to reduce the chance Asian carp can enter the Great Lakes. The Corps essentially lays out a plan in which Asian carp have to run a gauntlet of defenses before the invasive fish could even get to the Brandon Road lock--reducing the chance that an Asian carp gets through at each stage. The Corps needs to finalize this plan as efficiently as possible and

“Great Lakes” Continued on page 13



Michael Lemanski holding his state-record cisco

DNR announces new state-record cisco caught on Lake Ottawa

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources confirmed a new state-record fish for cisco (formerly known as lake herring). This marks the second state-record fish caught in 2017.

The fish was caught Friday, June 9, at 10 a.m. by Michael Lemanski of Florence, Wisconsin, on Lake Ottawa in Iron County in the western Upper Peninsula. Lemanski was still-fishing with a homemade jig. The fish weighed 6.36 pounds and measured 21.8 inches.

The record was verified by Jennifer Johnson, a DNR fisheries biologist in Crystal Falls.

The previous state-record cisco (lake herring) was caught by Robert Rogers of Hartford, Wisconsin, in 1992 while trolling the East Arm of Grand Traverse Bay. That fish weighed 5.4 pounds and measured 25 inches.

Although this fish was caught in June, we only recently verified it as a state record, said Gary Whelan, the DNR's fisheries research manager. The reason for the delay stemmed from the fact we wanted to ensure this fish was not a hybrid between a cisco and a lake whitefish. These fish look extremely similar so we gathered DNA from the fish to test its compatibility with what we know about cisco. That test, done by Michigan State University, proved to be a match.

State records are recognized by weight only. To qualify for a state record, fish must exceed the current listed state-record weight and identification must be verified by a DNR fisheries biologist.

To view a current list of Michigan state-record fish, visit michigan.gov/staterecordfish.

SMOKED SALMON

READY IN: 5hrs 15mins

INGREDIENTS

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 3 lbs salmon fillets | 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder |
| 1/2 cup salt | 2 tablespoons lemon juice |
| 1/2 teaspoon black pepper | 2 tablespoons |
| 3/4 cup sugar | Worcestershire sauce |
| 3/4 cup brown sugar | 1/8 cup honey |
| 1 quart water | 1/8 cup molasses |
| | 1 teaspoon sesame seed oil |

DIRECTIONS

Cut fillets into 1 inch wide strips. Prepare brine solution and place in a non-metallic container. Add salmon strips to brine and refrigerate for 4 to 6 hours. Rinse fish in cold water and refrigerate overnight to dry. Spray smoker racks with cooking spray (PAM). Fasten foil under racks to prevent dripping. Place salmon on racks leaving room between strips. Smoke for 4 to 5 hours rotating racks top to bottom half way through the process.



Photo Credit: www.alaskanharvestseafood.com

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“Great Lakes” Continued from page 12

Congress needs to act with urgency to authorize and appropriate the necessary actions that will help protect our Great Lakes, fish and wildlife, and economy.

Fishery's Chief, Jim Dexter provided an assessment/overview of the state of our fishery at the MSSFA Board Meeting on October 7th. He did excellent job of explaining what is occurring in the ecosystem and what we can expect in 2018. Both the Lake Huron and Lake Michigan Citizen Advisory committees met in October and the minutes will be posted on line at mssfa.org soon.

Finally, I am in the process of contacting advertisers and soliciting advertising agreements for the Great Lakes Sport Fishing News' Special Edition in January 2018 and for following issues for the coming year.



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Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Weirs: An Important DNR Tool to Manage Fisheries and Educate the Public

By Bob Gwizdz
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Michigan is home to a tremendous Great Lakes sport fishery, which includes native lake trout, steelhead, brown trout and several varieties of salmon introduced to these freshwater inland seas in the 1960s or beforehand.

To maintain this fishery, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources relies on fish stocking with the help of eggs taken from spawning fish.

Steelhead (rainbow trout) and Chinook and coho salmon were introduced to the Great Lakes with fish stock taken from northern California in the case of steelhead, and from the Pacific Northwest for the salmon.

There, the fish were born in freshwater lakes and streams, then migrated to the saltwater of the Pacific Ocean, where they matured, before returning to spawn.

Once they were transplanted to Michigan, these fish continued to act on this instinct, but instead of migrating to salt water, they migrate to the Great Lakes.

Fish with this type of behavior are called anadromous fishes.

To get eggs from salmon and steelhead for fish stocking, the DNR first needs to capture the fish. This is done by use of one of the most important parts of the DNR's fish-stocking system: weirs.

"My definition of a weir is a removable dam," said Aaron Switzer, the DNR's Platte River State Fish Hatchery manager and weir coordinator. "There are two types of weirs: those that allow water to completely pass through but don't allow fish to pass up and those that not only stop fish passage but impound water, too."

"Our lower weir on the Platte River allows water to pass through but doesn't allow fish to pass. It goes in Aug. 15 every year. What that does is it allows us to control the number of coho (salmon) that we let up from the lower weir."

As part of a court-ordered consent decree, the DNR allows 20,000 coho salmon through the weir. After that, the remaining fish are harvested and marketed.

"The upper weir at the Platte River does back up the water at the upper weir – that's like that so we can gravity feed the water into the building (where spawn and milt are collected) and maturation ponds," Switzer said.

When fish reach the up-

per weir, they remain in a holding pond until fisheries biologists determine that the females' eggs are ripe enough to be fertilized successfully.

"When the females are 75 percent ripe, it's green light, let's go," Switzer said.

Usually, egg take begins around the second week of October.

Overall, the DNR operates five weirs (six if you count the Platte River in Benzie County, Little Manistee River in Manistee County, the Boardman River in downtown Traverse City in Grand Traverse County, the Swan River (on Lake Huron) in Presque Isle County and Medusa

Creek near Charlevoix in Charlevoix County – and they all have different functions.

The Platte River facility is the DNR's source of coho salmon eggs. The Little Manistee River weir is the prime source for Chinook salmon eggs and the only source for steelhead eggs. Any fall steelhead, brown trout or other fish that wind up in the Little Manistee River during Chinook egg take are allowed to pass upstream.

The Swan River facility has been considered a back-up facility for many years, but was used to procure Chinook eggs the last two years when there was an insufficient supply at the Little Manistee.

There's a weir at the Boardman River that is not used for egg take at all.

"We just don't get enough fish there to use it as back up," Switzer said. "But it's used to keep the fish from going upstream and dying in town. And we've used that for the last few years as an educational facility – a place to learn about salmon and how we manage them. It's an educational facility as much as anything else."

"We get plenty of people through the Little Manistee, Platte and the Boardman. They're all great places to educate the public and for the public to see us in operation."

There is no public access at Swan River; the

weir is on private property and access is restricted.

The weir at Medusa Creek is strictly a harvest facility. There is no physical facility there, but water is diverted from the creek into a holding pond where the fish collect.

"We can't have all those mature salmon going up a creek that's 2 feet wide running up into the cement plant," Switzer said, though it could be a potential egg-take site in the future if necessary.

The lower weir at Platte takes about a half day's work for a crew of four people to put it in and to remove it, Switzer said.

"The upper weir takes time," he continued. "There are basically big steel

boards that go in the channels in the concrete at the weir. We install it and take it out in stages so they don't completely deplete downstream flow in installation and not let a big slug of water downstream all at once during removal.

"That process usually covers about two weeks."

Switzer said the DNR usually installs the upper weir around Sept. 1 and it stays in place until July 15 "because we also use it to block steelhead and sea lamprey. Lamprey cannot get past it. It is an effective lamprey barrier."

Sea lamprey, an invasive fish that preys on na-

"Weirs"

Continued on page 15

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How Did Michigan's Au Sable River Change the World?

Find the answers at the Michigan History Museum's newest exhibition

In 1959, 16 fishermen, united by their love of trout and the Au Sable River, gathered at George Griffith's home east of Grayling, in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula. The sportsmen were concerned about the need for long-term conservation of Michigan's coldwater streams. They were convinced that better and more scientific habitat care would help the state's trout population thrive, creating not only better fishing, but also a better environment. Nearly 60 years later, Trout Unlimited, the organization founded by those fishermen, has become a national champion of fish habitat conservation.

Trout Unlimited's founding on the Au Sable is showcased in the Michigan History Museum's newest exhibition, The River that

"Weirs"

Continued from page 14

tive lake trout, spawn in streams like the salmon and steelhead do.

Weirs allow the DNR to herd fish into one place and process them in a timely matter. Without weirs, DNR staff would be reduced to using nets or electro-fishing gear to collect fish. The process would be longer, more expensive and not nearly as effective.

The DNR does not operate any weirs in the Upper Peninsula.

Egg take at the Platte River occurs throughout October. It's a popular school group and tourist attraction as it allows the public to see how the operation works. At the Little Manistee River, visitors are welcome during the fall Chinook and spring steelhead egg takes.

Staff members from the DNR's Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery Visitor Center and Carl T. Johnson Hunt and Fish Center lead free fall tours at the Boardman River, Little Manistee River and Platte River weirs through mid-October.

Visitors can learn about salmon biology, how weirs and fish ladders work, invasive species, state fish hatcheries, and the DNR's annual egg-collection efforts and their impact on Michigan's fisheries.

For more information on tours, visit www.michigan.gov/huntfishcenter and click on the Boardman River Weir 2017 Programs or Platte River Weir 2017 Programs link, or visit www.michigan.gov/wolflakevc and click on the Little Manistee River Weir 2017 Programs link.

To learn more about how the DNR manages Michigan's fisheries, visit www.michigan.gov/fishing.



Michigan History Museum exhibit showing beakers from the Grayling fish hatchery used to raise fish from eggs

Changed the World, opened Saturday, Sept. 30. Visitors enjoyed a first look at the new exhibition, and opportunity to engage with guest presenters and hands-on activities.

"The Au Sable River has influenced – and continues to influence – people around the world," said Mark Harvey, Michigan's state archivist and the exhibition's curator. "The stories in the exhibition demonstrate the innovative and unprecedented ways private citizens and state government worked together to conserve and protect the river and sustainably manage its fish populations."

The exhibition features George Griffith's 24-foot-long Au Sable river boat, surrounded by river scenes. A re-creation of the Wanigas Rod Shop introduces fly fisherman and rod maker Art Neumann, another founding member of Trout Unlimited. Nearby, visitors of all ages can learn how to tie a fly and compare tied flies to real insects under a microscope.

The exhibition also introduces the relationship between the Anishinaabe (Odawa and Ojibwe people) and the Au Sable River. It highlights how their use of the river changed with the seasons and includes tools and fish bones from an archaeological site along the river.

The late 19th-century work of state conservationists and private citizens who tried to save the Arctic grayling – the iconic native coldwater fish that once

dominated northern Michigan streams – is represented by a "battery" of glass beakers from the Grayling fish hatchery. Each beaker held thousands of eggs. Arctic grayling were native only to Michigan and Montana in the lower 48 states.

Original paneling and artifacts from the Wolverine fish car, which carried millions of fish by rail across Michigan, tell the story of subsequent efforts to plant trout in the Au Sable. Fred Westerman, former fisheries chief in the Michigan Department of Conservation (the forerunner to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources) and one of the first employees of the Wolverine, once reported: "Frequently ... thirty cans of fish would be dropped off at some spooky junction - like in the jack pine at Au Sable-Oscoda with the cemetery across the tracks and the depot a mile from town – on the night run of the Detroit & Mackinac, to await the morning train going up the river branch."

The exhibit's final section presents Grayling as a destination for fishing and tourism since the mid-19th century. It combines competing interests and different perspectives on the future of the Au Sable, with an appreciation of the river's recreational draw. In this section, visitors can sit in a kayak and experience a 360-degree, virtual reality paddle down the Au Sable, either by using an Oculus Rift headset or their own smart devices and cardboard viewers. At the end of the exhibition,

visitors are invited share their stories about the rivers that they love and how they might work to protect them.

Current DNR Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter agrees that the Au Sable is a premier outdoor fishing destination, and he applauds the vision and passion of the people who early on recognized that potential.

"As the name of the exhibit implies, the Au Sable is a world-class fishery

resource attracting anglers from every corner of the earth. It's one of the most stable groundwater-influenced watersheds in North America, and produces exceptional trout fishing," Dexter said. "It wasn't always that way, though. Without the creation of Trout Unlimited at the Au Sable River, by those who understood the potential of our coldwater resources, Michigan might not be home to one of the world's greatest trout fisheries."

The exhibition will run through next summer, and is included with regular museum admission. The Michigan History Museum is a nationally accredited museum located in the east wing of the Michigan Library and Historical Center, on the north side of Kalamazoo Street, two blocks east



of M. L. King Jr. Boulevard. The museum is open year-round, seven days a week. For more information, call 517-373-3559 or visit www.michigan.gov/museum.

The Michigan History Center is part of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its museum and archival programs foster curiosity, enjoyment, and inspiration rooted in Michigan's stories. It includes the Michigan History Museum, 10 regional museums, and the Archives of Michigan. Learn more at www.michigan.gov/michiganhistory.



Closeup view of birchbark canoe exhibit

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